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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An impregnated fibrous veil, comprising:

a nonwoven fibrous veil including a prebinder and reinforcing fibers selected from a group consisting of glass fibers, ceramic fibers, and mixtures thereof, said nonwoven fibrous veil having at least one face impregnated with a surface finish formulation including about 50 to about 95 weight percent filler, about 5 to about 50 weight percent binder and about 0 to about 10 percent optical brightener.

- 2. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 1, further characterized by an air porosity of at least 1,500 l/m²s at 1 m Bar pressure.
- 3. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 2, wherein microspheres are substantially absent from said surface finish formulation.
- 4. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 1, wherein said impregnated fibrous veil is further characterized by a compressibility ratio of 1.2 or less between 0.5 and 25.0 kPa pressure.
- 5. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 2, wherein said impregnated fibrous veil has a thickness of 0.5 mm or less at 0.5 kPa.
- 6. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 3 wherein said nonwoven fibrous veil includes about 5 to about 20 weight percent prebinder and between about 80 to about 95 weight percent reinforcing fibers.
- 7. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 4, wherein said prebinder includes bonding fibers.
- 8. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 4, wherein said prebinder includes thermoplastic bonding fibers.
- 9. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 4, wherein said prebinder includes bicomponent fibers.
- 10. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 4 wherein said prebinder is selected from a group of materials consisting of a water soluble binder, an emulsion binder, polymers and copolymers of styrene, butadiene, acrylic and methacrylic monomers, vinyl acetate, polyesters, polyvinyl alcohols, melamin formaldehyde resins, urea formaldehyde resins and mixtures thereof.
- 11. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 5 wherein said reinforcing fibers have a diameter between about 6.5 and about 16.0 microns and a length between about 4 and about 18 mm.

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12. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 11, wherein said filler is an inorganic filler that is dispersable in water.

- 13. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 12, wherein said inorganic filler has an average particle size in the range of about 0.1 to about 10.0 microns.
- 14. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 13, wherein said filler is selected from a group consisting of calcium carbonate, aluminum trihydrate, titanium dioxide, magnesium hydroxide, silicium oxide, clay, talc and mixtures thereof.
- 15. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 14, wherein said binder includes both thermosetting and thermoplastic resins.
- 16. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 14, wherein said binder is a water dispersable emulsion type binder or a solution type binder.
- 17. The impregnated fibrous veil of claim 14, wherein said binder is selected from a group of materials consisting of a water soluble binder, an emulsion binder, polymers and copolymers of styrene, butadiene, acrylic and methacrylic monomers, vinyl acetate, polyesters, polyvinyl alcohols, melamin formaldehyde resins, urea formaldehyde resins and mixtures thereof.
- 18. A method of producing an impregnated fibrous veil with a smooth surface finish, comprising:

impregnating at least one face of a nonwoven fibrous veil including a prebinder and reinforcing fibers with a surface finish formulation including about 50 to about 95 weight percent filler, about 5 to about 50 weight percent binder and about 0 to about 10 weight percent optical brightener.

- 19. The method of claim 18 wherein said impregnating step includes applying said surface finish formulation to said at least one face of said nonwoven fibrous veil at a rate of between about 15.0 and 55.0 g/m^2 .
- 20. The method of claim 19, wherein said impregnating step includes feeding said nonwoven fibrous veil in-line during said applying step.
- 21. The method of claim 20, wherein said impregnating step includes drying and consolidating said impregnated fibrous veil following said applying step.
- 22. The method of claim 18 further including producing a nonwoven fibrous veil and performing said impregnating step inline with said nonwoven fibrous veil production.